Grant Writing for Successful Proposals

A VITAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

WEBINAR

Barbara Paradiso

Introductions

- Who is on the Call
- Approach to the Webinar
- Dialogue
  - Mute and Un-Mute
  - Chat Box

Agenda

I. Laying the Foundation
II. Reading a Request for Proposal
III. Common Grant Elements
IV. Building a Compelling Case Statement
V. Tips for Writing Strong Goals and Objectives
VI. Creating a Logic Model
VII. Budgeting to the Proposal Objectives
Laying the Foundation

- Grantsmanship is the process of researching, selecting and applying for grants.
- It is a critical component to developing and sustaining programs.
- Grants from government, corporate and foundation sources make up the largest share of income for most dv/sa programs.
- Be creative in researching funding opportunities.

A Competitive Process

A successful proposal is one that brings to life the realities of a community -- its needs, interests, hopes or potential -- and connects those to the stated funding interests of the grantmaker.

Universal Attributes of Successful Grants

Demonstrate that the applicant:
- Is stable and well-managed, with a track record of effective programming;
- Has the support of its stakeholders, as well as strong relationships with key institutions in the community;
- Understands the issues and needs of its target constituency and thoughtfully develops appropriate programs that directly address those needs, with stated objectives and timeframes; and
- Is capable of carrying out and evaluating the program(s) described in the proposal.
Its All About Relationships!

- Research the funder to determine its giving priorities, grant guidelines and when its fiscal year begins.
- Decide if your needs can be met by the funder's grant making program.
- Call six months before the application due date and ask to meet with a program officer.
- Following your meeting, send supplementary information about your organization; respond to any questions posed.
- Invite the appropriate designee to visit your program.
- Express an interest in becoming a reviewer (gov. grants)

Read the Entire RFP

Key elements to look for:
- Purpose of the grant
- Who is eligible to apply
- Types of projects being funded
- Grant amounts
- Match requirement
- Length of grant period
- Application guidelines (e.g., LOI? Specified format? Letters of support or MOUs?)
- Application deadlines.

Standard Grant Proposal Elements

- Abstract/Summary Statement
- Needs/Problem Statement
- Project Description
- Goals and Objectives
- Timeline
- Credentials or proof of organizational capacity
- Evaluation or description of how project outcomes will be measured
- Budget
Process Tips

- Save one unaltered and complete copy of the full grant proposal
- Set aside one to two hours to read the proposal package
- Highlight requirements and develop:
  - A To-Do List
  - A list of the requirements (e.g., deadlines, document presentation, spacing, type, size, pacing, limitations, one- or two-sided binders, etc.)
  - A timetable (working backward from due date) — include time for someone else to read, edit, and do a mock evaluation of your proposal
  - Outline of your final proposal based on their recommendations or forms
  - A list of folks to contact for technical assistance or information
  - Become intimate with evaluation criteria — they are the answers
  - Make notes about the grantor's language: use their terms and terminology

More Process Tips

- Once a clear concept for the grant is developed, request support letters (if necessary or allowed). Think politically; select letters that will sell and support your project
- Write the summary/abstract last
- Draft your budget early — it forces you to make your plans and ideas more concrete
- Understand the grantor's in-kind and match allowances and requirements
- Does the grantor want a budget justification and a budget?
- Does the grantor have a preferred format? (e.g., columns to show totals, columns, etc.)
- Does grantor ask about indirect cost, equipment purchases, disposal of inventory purchased with grant funds?
- Have someone proof your budget. Do the numbers compute? Do columns and rows add up?

The Needs Statement

- Describes the problem area or need that the proposed project will address.
- Makes a compelling case as to why this program or project is needed.
  - Use statistical, testimonial, or other evidence that shows that the proposed plan is essential
- Defines the issue or need of the target population
  - Not of the organization applying for funds
Building a Compelling Case

- **Tell a Story**
  - A strong problem or needs statement uses facts, statistics, examples, and/or case studies to document the extent of the problem.
- **Be convincing, clear, and concise**
  - Provide 2 or 3 statements to support your case.
- **Relate to the funder’s stated purposes and goals**
- **Provide supportive documentation; show proof.**
  - *Ex: African American girls between 18-24 in Maine have a high rate of dating violence. (you must prove that this statement is accurate)*
- **Justify the need for specific funding:**
  - *E.g. under-utilization; no use of current services; lack of access to services.*

Documenting the Problem

- **Agency records of service provision**
  - Use both qualitative and quantitative.
- **Statistics from public sources, i.e. police or health department records, national Census, local city council members’ office or other public agencies.**
- **Surveys conducted by your agency or other community groups at the local, state, territorial, tribal, or national level.**
- **Research articles (Google Scholar)**
- **Data available from sister organizations**

Goals and Objectives

- **Goals** are broad statements related to the long-term impact of the group’s work, closely related to the mission statement.
- **Goals** concern themselves with the question, “What does the program want to accomplish?”
- **Goals** reach into the future – they set direction.

Examples:
- All members of the XYZ Network will have access to the resources they need to sustain viable programs.
- No child in Penacook County will go hungry.

*TIP: Use visionary words when describing your project’s goals. E.g. deliver, have, establish, ensure, produce.*
### Goals and Objectives

- Objectives are narrow, precise, concrete, and tangible and can be measured.
- Objectives describe how you intend to accomplish your goals by achieving what measurable actions.
- Each goal should have at least two and no more than four specific objectives.

*TIP: Beverly A. Browning, *Grant Writing for Dummies* suggests using the SMART method of writing objectives: ensure that each objective is Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.

### Objectives

**Process** objectives reflect the primary methods or activities of the project, and describe the major internal objectives of those carrying out the work.

Examples:
- By the second month of the project, representatives of 40 organisations from the Midwestern states will be recruited to participate in the leadership training.
- Provide one hot meal daily to 80 senior County residents per year.

### Objectives

**Outcome** objectives describe the increase or decrease in the problems or conditions of the target constituency. They address the benefits to the target constituency.

Examples:
- Telephone surveys will find that at least 75% of participants in the grant writing webinar will report an increase in completed grant proposals by the end of the funding period.
- Follow-up surveys will find that at least half of webinar participants have increased their funding by 15% or more within one year after participation in the program.
How to Determine Outcomes

Consider the work you do and what you are trying to accomplish. Answer the following:

- What do you hope battered women and their children will experience as a result of their contact with your program?
- What identified need are you attempting to meet? What problem are you attempting to solve?
- What are you going to measure in order to determine and document that experience?
- What measurable change in emotion, attitude, knowledge, behavior, will really indicate that the identified need was met?
- Is your predicted measurable change logically or theoretically linked to the battered woman or child's use of the service?
- Are these 'expected' or 'achieved' going to be:
  - Observable? (Can you measure the change?)
  - Relevant to the target population?
  - Feasible for your organization to implement or execute?

Cautions

- Tie your goals and objectives directly to your needs statement.
- Allow sufficient time to accomplish the objectives.
- Do not confuse your outcome objectives (which focus on the experiences of the target population during the project period) for methods (which describe your activities).
- Figure out how you will measure the change projected in each objective.
- If there is no way to measure an objective, it needs to be changed.

Timelines

- The time line/chart provides a clear and thorough path, sequence of events, activities to meeting the objectives. You can provide the time chart component in a variety of ways and formats:
  - Process objectives
  - Work plan/timeline

Regardless of which format you use, you will need to incorporate all of the components of the methods/activities identified in the process objectives.
Evaluation

- Evaluation is the bridge between where you have been and where you are going.
- Evaluation is the loop which can measure whether your program is meeting the needs of your target population, solving problems, or having no impact.
- Should compare the actual experience of the target population to your hypothesized experience.
- There should be an evaluation of each objective and related methods/work plan.

Components of Evaluation

- A. Describes what kind of data collection tools you will use to gather information about the impact of your activities on the target population, e.g. Pre and post-tests, Interviews, Client self-reporting, Staff observations.
- B. Describes what process you would employ to use the selected tools, compile and analyze the collected data, e.g. How will data be routinely documented and collected? Who will collect, compile, review the data?
- C. Describes how you will report and use your analysis, e.g. How and when will you report results to staff to make program adjustments?

Budgeting

- Line items and costs should logically connect to grant methods and activities.
- Comply with the grantor's in-kind and match allowances and requirements.
- Use the budget narrative or justification to detail how each line item figure was calculated.
- Use the grantor's preferred format.
- Carefully read the grantor's definitions of budget categories, acceptable and unacceptable uses of funds.
- Have someone proof your budget. Do the numbers compute? Do columns and rows add up? Use a spreadsheet with auto calculations.
A Moment on Logic Models

- **Situation and Priorities** (determine what Inputs are needed)
- **Inputs** (what we invest: what resources go into the project)
- **Outputs:**
  - Activities (the actual tasks we do)
  - Participation (who/how many we serve; customers, stakeholders)
- **Outcomes/Impacts:**
  - Short Term (learning, awareness, knowledge, skills, motivations)
  - Medium Term (action: behavior, practice, decisions, policies)
  - Long Term (consequences: social, economic, environmental etc.)

Community A Example

Community A is a southern Colorado couple with two distinct low income neighborhoods—one Latino and one African American. There are no domestic violence or sexual assault services located in either of these communities. The local emergency room reports that many, young women from these communities have been physically abused by their partners. Women are hesitant to seek help due to fear of response by their partners or lack of understanding from family and friends. A hospital that serves patients needing women's health care has been notified about this and is working to develop a program to educate and address domestic violence and sexual assault. They have been working within their communities to gather the necessary planning and information on how to best approach this problem. Several months ago, the hospital launched this program to educate and inform women of the services available. The hospital now provides information on the services, but very few follow-up referrals. Both the local shelter and the local rape crisis center report low numbers of usage for these communities. Anita, a worker at the local domestic violence shelter, would like to see more outreach done to these communities and has been thinking about starting a program to educate and address domestic violence and sexual assault. She has been talking to other women who live in the two communities and they would like to develop some new initiatives that are more relevant to the communities and start a day in center in the community.

Questions:

- What policies should Anita emphasize and what type of education might she provide in a great need to increase the awareness of Community A?
- List three possible goals and objectives for Community A.
- Identify the types of needs that might arise as Anita moves out the objectives identified for Community A.

A Quick Review

- Write to the funder's priorities
- Respond directly to the questions/segments posed by the funder
- Use the funder's language to describe your work
- Be clear and concise
- Be logical and consistent (e.g., project description should reasonably reflect the project description, etc.)
- Use space wisely – do not repeat yourself
- Think like the funder – answer the questions they may have
- Have someone review your work
Rejected Despite Your Best Efforts?

- Call to find out what could have been improved.
- Ask about a potential date to resubmit the proposal.
- Continue to touch base with the funder, informing it of your organization's milestones.
- Do not give in to potential requests to alter your focus! Seek alternate funders.

Thank You!

Resources:
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Proposal Checklist and Evaluation Form
- Peer Review/Vital TA